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PROPOSAL FOR A REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AT UNICEF HEADQUARTERS

SUMMARY

In decision 1991/31 (E/ICEF/1991/15), the Executive Board requested the UNICEF secretariat to prepare an outline proposal for a management review, to consider the need for undertaking such a review and, if it was so decided, to determine its scope. Prior to submitting the outline proposal to the 1992 Executive Board, the Executive Director consulted the Bureau, and with its concurrence recommended that the Board defer its consideration until the 1993 regular session. In decision 1992/39 (E/ICEF/1992/14), the Board deferred a decision on whether to proceed with a review until its 1993 session.

The present paper outlines a proposal that includes a description of recent management reviews, a proposed framework for the review, including its scope, organization and responsibilities, work plan, budget and costs. It takes into account comments and advice made on the outline proposal by Board members at the 1992 session.

The Executive Director recommends the following proposal for adoption by the Executive Board.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. The Executive Board reviewed at its 1992 regular session, an outline proposal for a possible review of administrative management structures at UNICEF headquarters prepared by the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1992/AB/L.10). In decision 1992/39 (E/ICEF/1992/14), the Board deferred a decision on whether to proceed with a review, and if so, on its possible scope, until its 1993 regular session. During the Board's consideration of the proposal, delegations provided useful comments and guidance which were taken into account in preparing this updated proposal.

2. In addition, the studies and reports prepared by the Budget Format Reference Group and the resulting Executive Board decisions have also been taken into account, as appropriate. In addition, the synthesis report of the evaluation of UNICEF was taken into consideration. In the broader United Nations context, the General Assembly provided guidance on operational activities for development at its forty-seventh session (resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992), although its work is continuing on matters related to restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. Because these developments could not be reflected in this proposal, they will be accommodated at a later stage.

3. A number of documents prepared for the 1993 session of the Executive Board may also be relevant to this proposal. They include: the executive summary of the synthesis report of the evaluation of UNICEF (E/ICEF/1993/CRP.7); the 1992-1993 revised and 1994-1995 proposed administrative and programme support budgets (E/ICEF/1993/AB/L.1); UNICEF and reform of the United Nations system (E/ICEF/1993/L.8); UNICEF emergency operations (E/ICEF/1993/11); and the global funds programme recommendation (E/ICEF/1993/P/L.3).

II. RECENT MANAGEMENT REVIEWS

4. In elaborating the present proposal, the Executive Director has taken into account the following major reviews undertaken in recent years:

(a) A review by an internal task force established by the then new Executive Director in 1980-1981, whose recommendations led to a major restructuring of Programme Division and other organizational units in 1982;

(b) A review of programming and budgetary matters undertaken by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in 1979 (E/ICEF/L.1403) and the follow-up discussions by the Executive Board, which resulted in the restructuring of the UNICEF budgetary system and, inter alia, in the adoption of a biennial budget cycle, starting in 1983;

(c) A 1986 JIU review of UNICEF activities and structures (JIU/REP/86/11), which was studied by the Executive Director (E/ICEF/1987/CRP.6) and discussed by the Board at its 1987 session (E/ICEF/1987/11). A number of its recommendations were incorporated in the ongoing reorganization process;

(d) A review by an internal task force on information resources management, whose recommendations in 1985-1986 led to several important structural changes, including the establishment of the Planning Office, the Evaluation Office and the Office of Information Resources Management and improvements in programme management information systems;

(e) A thorough and systematic review of the budget, staffing and structure of the organization, at headquarters and in the field, carried out on a biennial basis since 1983 by the Budget Planning and Review Committee (BPRC). This periodic review has often resulted in major reorganizations, notably the consolidation of the supply and procurement function at Copenhagen in 1983-1985, the significant strengthening of UNICEF field offices in Africa beginning in 1984 and subsequently in Latin America, starting in 1985. Important steps have also been taken to streamline and strengthen various regional offices and headquarters divisions, as necessary. BPRC paid particular attention to these aspects when preparing the proposed 1994-1995 administrative and programme support budget. The extensive work performed by the Reference Group and the 1992 Executive Board's review and decisions concerning its recommendations have been implemented to improve further and strengthen UNICEF programme and operational management, accountability and structures;

(f) An evaluation of external relations functions carried out in 1989 (E/ICEF/1990/L.4), which led to significant changes and improvements in the management of UNICEF external relations and the clarification of some of those functions.

5. Through the above-mentioned studies, evaluations and reviews, the UNICEF administrative and management structures have been and continue to be adjusted and reinforced, in keeping with the policy decisions and directives given to the secretariat by the Executive Board. The Executive Director believes that these undertakings provide a useful basis for developing further approaches and carrying out the proposed management review.

III. MANDATE AND MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES

6. In 1992, encouraging progress was made in follow-up to the World Summit for Children, with 136 countries either having finalized their national plans of action or in the process of doing so. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 130 countries. The goals established by the World Summit for Children have received endorsements at high-level regional conferences in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Consequently, the role of child-focused advocacy has greatly increased in the context of UNICEF work at country and global levels. These developments are having an important impact on the ongoing work of UNICEF and will also contribute towards its future work.

7. At the same time, together with the rest of the United Nations system, UNICEF is becoming increasingly involved in serious emergency situations that have grave consequences and pose extreme hazards for women and children in affected countries. While there are monumental challenges to be faced under these circumstances, there are equally powerful opportunities. UNICEF can draw upon its considerable experience and contribute its comparative advantages, thus

bringing about potentially far-reaching changes in the life and living conditions of affected groups.

8. Historically, the Executive Board has provided leadership and guidance and contributed towards identifying new horizons and opportunities where the work of the organization can provide increasing support for improving the condition of children. Its initiative in decision 1991/31 (E/ICEF/1991/15) to undertake a management review was particularly important, as the Board recognized that the challenges for UNICEF in the 1990s would require appropriate and efficient administrative and management structures. The Board has also expressed the desire that the management review be reform-oriented. In addition, it would draw on the Executive Board's deliberations on the recent evaluation.

9. In recent years, the work of UNICEF, as well as its financial resources, staffing and structures have expanded and undergone changes. This has been noted by the Executive Board and the evaluation. The management review will study this aspect of the UNICEF structure and review the adequacy of typical field office situations with reference to implementation of goals, accountability and good management practices, improved efficiency and better monitoring of UNICEF-assisted programmes.

IV. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

10. The Executive Director agrees with the Executive Board that the review should be forward-looking and build upon the best UNICEF traditions. He suggests that the review focus on exploring how UNICEF can be more effective and efficient in assisting developing countries to implement the ambitious programme goals and strategies for children in the 1990s approved by the Board.

11. The study should also focus on strengthening and monitoring of management by objectives as well as accountability in the administration of resources entrusted to UNICEF. The study may also examine the need to strengthen parts of headquarters and field structures in order to ensure that they remain appropriate and efficient into and beyond the year 2000.

12. An important consideration for a management review is to ensure that its findings and recommendations be relevant and practical. This is the only approach that will enable UNICEF to benefit fully from the exercise and to devise appropriate mechanisms for the application of its outcome.

A. Scope of the review

13. The study would build upon the recent management review exercises, some of which are mentioned above. The considerable analysis undertaken by the Reference Group established by the Executive Board would provide an important basis. The outcome of the recent evaluation of UNICEF would also contribute to this process. In the light of these events, particularly the guidance the Board has provided on the reports prepared by the Reference Group, the review would:

(a) Identify and analyse projections for the next 10 to 15 years, as well as the focus of the UNICEF mandate and the nature and emphasis of its tasks and

priorities. The review should also take into account the specific directions for the remainder of the 1990s as outlined by the Summit goals and related programme priorities. The analysis would indicate how UNICEF should be organized and structured to provide support for achieving those goals in financial, budgetary, personnel and management terms;

(b) Analyse existing UNICEF structures in the context of the organization's mandate. The study would review progressive developments in the role and responsibilities of headquarters in relation to the Executive Board, UNICEF field and regional offices, the United Nations system and other partners. The broad historical analysis would cover the past 10 to 15 years;

(c) Describe in specific detail the evolution of the work of UNICEF and its implications in such areas as advocacy at the highest decision-making levels as a programming approach; social and community mobilization; increased involvement by Professional staff in policy formulation and field operations; more staff-intensive and direct project-level involvement; an appropriate measure of supplies and other forms of assistance in programme development and implementation; training; and project implementation and monitoring.

14. This information and data would facilitate the analysis and identification of specific issues, as well as recommendations for resolving them, such as policy development, support, service and supervisory functions of headquarters divisions; the role of the regional offices in relation to headquarters and field offices; relations with other United Nations development agencies; and the working relationship between the secretariat and the Board, in view of the changing environment and new challenges facing children and women.

B. Organization and responsibilities

15. The Executive Director would coordinate and carry out the management review. After the scope and terms of reference have been approved by the Board, a senior level coordinator would be designated by the Executive Director to head a core working group of six to seven selected UNICEF staff, with appropriate field representation, to work on the study. Outside management consultants, as necessary, will work together with the UNICEF team.

16. Regular consultations with the members of the Executive Board through the Bureau have been planned in the work calendar during the course of this review.

C. Work plan

UNICEF team

17. The core working group appointed by the Executive Director would as its first task prepare specific details of a plan of action. Members would be assigned clear responsibilities within the overall framework of the study. They would also be assigned liaison functions with and receive assistance and information from specific headquarters divisions and regional and field offices. The group would also work closely with the consultants. Sub-groups may be created and abolished as necessary to work on specific topics.

18. The Executive Director and the deputies will act as the policy team, receiving periodic reports on progress, resolving issues as they arise and providing overall policy guidance and direction. They would also be the link with the members of the Bureau and Executive Board.

Consultants

19. The selection of appropriate consultants is very important for undertaking an effective review and its outcome. They should possess a strong international background, as well as a full understanding of and experience in social development issues. Equally strong credentials in the application of modern management systems and methods are essential.

20. As UNICEF works in developing countries and is in close contact with their Governments and people, the Executive Director suggests that the consultants should possess intimate knowledge and experience of conditions and situations in those countries. A possible method to achieve that would be to combine as a team consultants from developing countries and those from industrialized countries.

21. The consultants and the UNICEF team would work together to assist the Executive Director in realizing the objectives of the study as determined by the Executive Board. They will contribute an independent perspective and suggest state-of-the-art methodologies and approaches for achieving the highest levels of objectivity and efficiency in analysing and drawing conclusions from the available information and data. They can also identify the need for additional data and will contribute to the technical design of the study.

Timetable

22. The comprehensive study being proposed requires a deliberate analysis and careful attention to detail so that its conclusions and recommendations are appropriate and suitable for practical application. The proposed time-frame will ensure that the findings of the review, following the endorsement by the Executive Board, can be considered and applied in the preparation of the next biennial budget, to be considered by the Board in 1995. A proposed timetable follows below.

TIMETABLE FOR MANAGEMENT STUDY ACTIVITIES

May-September 1993	(a) The Executive Board approves the scope and content of the study; (b) The Executive Director carefully reviews the guidance received from the 1993 Executive Board and finalizes plans, including identification of consultants, their terms of reference, selection and appointment; (c) The Executive Director appoints a coordinator and a core team. The team would undertake detailed formulation of study approaches, prepare a methodology and logistics and undertake consultations within and outside UNICEF, as necessary; (d) With the participation of the consultants, the core team reviews the scope and content of the study, identifying the methodology and work plan, organizing relevant information and data as available, identifying any gaps and arranging to fill them; (e) The Executive Director undertakes consultations as relevant before finalizing the detailed plans.
September-November 1993	(a) Proceed with the study, including data collection and analysis, working with consultants and making other consultations as necessary; (b) Initial conclusions to be ready by 15 November 1993 for review and guidance by the Executive Director and the deputies; (c) The core team, with assistance from consultants, to finalize the draft of study and its conclusions; (d) Consultations with the Bureau and Board members as planned.
December 1993	Finalization of a draft study.
January-February 1994	Consultations with the Bureau on conclusions and to determine further actions.
March 1994	Prepare the study in its final form for presentation to the Executive Board.
May 1994	The Executive Board considers the study and its recommendations.

D. Budget and costs

23. The management review described above would entail two types of costs: (a) all costs related to UNICEF regular staff assigned to carry out the review, including their travel and any temporary assistance, should short-term replacements become necessary; and (b) additional costs, including consultants' fees and travel, overhead costs, costs related to production of reports and all other related expenditures. The salaries of UNICEF staff assigned to the study are not included in the budget estimates provided below. Any travel for this purpose, over and above regular travel, is included in these estimates.

24. The estimated additional costs of the review, as described in this proposal, are as follows:

	United States dollars
Consultants' fees and all related costs	371 000
Transportation costs and per diem for consultants	85 000
Transportation costs and per diem for UNICEF staff assigned to carry out the review	60 000
Temporary staff support acquired for the management review project	50 000
Production costs and other expenditures related to the review project	26 000
Total	586 000

25. Based on the final decision of the Executive Board, the approval of the Board for these expenditures will be sought and added to the administrative and programme support budget being considered at the 1993 session.